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Memories.

"The bird I hear sings not from yonder elm;
But the flown ecstasy my childhood heard
Is vocal in my mind, renewed by him,
Haply made sweeter by the accumulate thrill
That threads my undivided life and steals
A pathos from the years and graves between.
I know not how it is with other men,
Whom I but guess, deciphering myself;
For me, once felt is so felt nevermore.
The fleeting relish at sensation's brim
Had in it the best ferment of the wine.
One spring I knew as never any since:
All night the surges of the warm southwest
Boomed intermittent through the shuddering elms
And brought a morning from the Gulf adrift,
Omnipotent with sunshine, whose quick charm
Startled with crocuses the sullen turf
And wiled the bluebird to his whiff of song;
One summer hour abides, what time I perched,
Dappled with noonday, under simmering leaves,
And pulled the pulpy oxhearts, while aloof
An oriole clattered and the robins shrilled
Denouncing me as an alien and a thief;
One morn of autumn lords it o'er the rest,
When in the lane I watched the ash-leaves fall,
Balancing softly earthward without wind
Or twirling with director impulse down
On those fallen yesterday, now barred with frost,
While I grew pensive with the pensive year.
And once I learned how marvellous winter was,
When past the fence rails, downy-gray with rime,
I creaked adventurous o'er the spangled crust
That made familiar fields seem far and strange
As those stark wastes that whiten endlessly
In ghastly solitude about the pole,
And gleam relentless to the unsetting sun;
Instant the candid chambers of my brain
Were painted with these sovran images;
And later visions seem but copies pale
From those unfolding frescoes of the past,
Which I, young savage, in my age of flint,
Gazed at, and dimly felt a power in me
Parted from nature by the joy in her
That doubtfully revealed me to myself.
Thenceforward I must stand outside the gate;
And paradise was paradise no more,
Known once and barred against satiety."

—"The Cathedral."—J. R. Lowell.

Rossini's "Barber of Seville."

From the Life of Rossini, by H. SUTHERLAND EDWARDS.*

When Rossini signed his agreement with Cesarini he had not the least idea what the libretto furnished to him would be. The manager had to arrange that matter with the censor before consulting the composer at all. Rossini had bound himself to set whatever was given to him, "new or old"; and it was, perhaps, fortunate that he had not left himself the right of refusing the admirable subject which Cesarini proposed to him a few days afterward.

The statement that Rossini wrote the whole of the "Barber of Seville" in thirteen days belongs originally to Stendhal. Castil-Blaze* says one month. It is certain the work did not occupy the composer near a month, and he really seems to have completed it in about a fortnight.

On the 26th December, when the agreement was signed, there was no libretto, and Rossini had not yet finished with "Torvaldo e Dorliska," which was produced on the evening of the 26th. On that evening, and the two following ones, Rossini had to direct the execution of his new work. He was not free then until the 29th; but he was not bound to supply the first act—more than half the opera, allowing for the length and musical importance of the finale—before January 20th. The second act was to be furnished to the

manager "at the time wished," and he certainly would not have desired to have it many days later than January 20th, inasmuch as the opera had to be presented to the public on February 5th.

Rossini, then, may have worked at the "Barber of Seville" from December 29th to January 24th, which would allow for the rehearsals just the time ordinarily required at the Italian theatres—twelve days. He must have composed the opera in less than a month; and he may, as Stendhal says, and as M. Azevedo repeats, apparently on Stendhal's authority, have finished it in thirteen days' time, for it is certain that some days were lost in choosing a subject, or rather in getting the choice approved by the Roman authorities.

At last, when the "Barber of Seville" had been decided upon by the manager and the censor, Rossini would only consent on condition that an entirely new libretto should be prepared for him. The construction of the new libretto was entrusted to Sterbini, the poet of "Torvaldo e Dorliska," and as no time was to be lost, the composer suggested that he should take up his quarters in "the house assigned to Luigi Zamboni."

In this remarkable establishment, the composer, the librettist, and the original Figaro, lived together for, say a fortnight, while the masterpiece was being manufactured.

For materials Rossini and his poet had Beaumarchais' comedy and the libretto of Paisiello's opera; and this time, by way of exception, instead of composing the music piece by piece as the words were furnished to him, Rossini commenced by asking Sterbini to read to him Beaumarchais' comedy from beginning to end.

"Il Barbieri" has quite the effect of an improvisation corrected and made perfect; and it was, indeed, produced under the most favorable circumstances for unity and completeness. Rossini had made Sterbini promise to remain with him until the opera was finished, and as rapidly as the latter wrote the verses the former set them to music.

Paisiello's distribution of scenes was not adopted—was purposely avoided; though the great situations in the comedy are of course reproduced in both the operas. In the new version of the "Barber" the grotesque episodic figures of "la Jeunesse" and "l'Eveillé," which Paisiello had retained, are very properly omitted. Where recitative would have been employed by the old master, Rossini has substituted dialogue sustained by the orchestra, the current of melody which flows throughout the work being here transferred from the voices to the instruments. There are more musical pieces, and there is two or three times as much music in the new "Barber" as in the old.

Fortunately Sterbini was an amateur poet, unburdened with literary pride, and prepared to carry out the composer's ideas. Rossini not only kept up with the librettist, but sometimes found himself getting in advance. He then suggested words for the music which he had already in his head. Some of the best pieces in "Il Barbieri," notably that of "La Calunnia," seem to have been directly inspired by Beaumarchais' eloquent, impetuous prose.

On the other hand, the famous "Largo al Fattotum," though equally replete with the spirit of Beaumarchais, may be said to owe something of its rhythm, and therefore something of its gayety, to Sterbini's rattling verses. The librettist was in a happy vein that morning, and thought he had overthrown himself. He told Rossini to take what verses suited him and throw the rest aside. Rossini took them all and set them to the rapid, elastic, light-hearted melody, which at once stamps the character of Figaro.

In the room where the two inventors were at

work, a number of copyists were employed, to whom the sheets of music were thrown one by one as they were finished. Doubtless the chief lodger, Luigi Zamboni, looked in from time to time to see how the part of Figaro was getting on. Probably, too, the spirited impresario called occasionally to enquire how the work generally was progressing.

But whether or not Rossini received visits, he certainly did not return them. Without taking it for granted as M. Azevedo does, that the joint authors for thirteen days and nights had scarcely time to eat; and slept, when they could no longer keep their eyes open, on a sofa (they would have saved time in the end by taking their clothes off and going to bed), we may be quite sure that "Il Barbieri" is the result of one continuous effort—if to the act of such rapid spontaneous production the word effort can be applied.

Rossini is said to have told some one, that during the thirteen days which he devoted to the composition of the "Barber" (if Rossini really said "thirteen days" there is of course an end to the question of time), he did not get shaved.

"It seems strange," was the rather obvious reply, "that through the 'Barber' you should have gone without shaving."

"If I had got shaved," explained Rossini, very characteristically, "I should have gone out, and if I had gone out I should not have come back in time."

While Rossini was working and letting his beard grow, Paisiello was quietly taking measures to insure a warm reception for the new opera.

FIRST REPRESENTATION.

First representations are a composer's battles. Rossini's hardest fight was at the first representation of the "Barber of Seville." For some reason not explained, the Roman public were as ill disposed towards Sterbini, the librettist, as toward Rossini himself—who was simply looked upon as an audacious young man, for venturing to place himself in competition with the illustrious Paisiello.

Paisiello's work had grown old (as the preface to Rossini's libretto, with all its compliments, ingeniously points out), and it had ceased to be played. Perhaps for that very reason the Roman public continued to hold it in esteem. Rossini, all the same, was to be punished for his rashness, and he seems to have been hissed, not only without his work being heard, but before one note of it had been played, and, according to M. Azevedo, before the doors were opened.

At least two original accounts have been published of the "Barber's" first representation to the Roman public—one, the most copious, by Zanolini;* the other, the most trustworthy, by Mme. Giorgi Righetti, who took a leading part in the performance on the stage. Mme. Giorgi Righetti was the Rosina of the evening.

Garcia, the celebrated tenor, was the Almaviva.

The Figaro was our friend the chief lodger, Luigi Zamboni, who, after distinguishing himself on all the operatic stages in Europe, became, like Garcia, a singing master, and taught other Figaros, besides Almavivas and Rosinas, how to sing Rossini's music.

The original Don Basilio was Vitarelli; Bartholo, Botticelli.

The overture, an original work, written expressly for "Il Barbieri," and not the overture to "Aureliano in Palmyra" afterward substituted for it, was executed in the midst of a general murmuring, "such," remarks Zanolini, "as is heard on the approach of a procession." Stend-

* Just reprinted by Oliver Ditson & Co., Boston.

* Theatre Lyriques de Paris:—Histoire du Theatre Italien.

* L'Ape Italiana, Paris, 1836.

hal says that the Roman public recognized, or thought they recognized, in the overture the grumbling of the old guardian, and the lively remonstrances of his interesting ward. But he also says that the overture performed was that of "Aureliano;" probably he confounds two different representations. M. Azevedo thinks the original overture was lost through the carelessness of a copyist, but it is difficult to understand how not only the composer's score, but also the orchestral parts, could have been lost in this manner. One thing is certain, that on the opening night the overture met with but little attention.

The introduction, according to Stendhal, was not liked, but this can only mean that it was not heard.

The appearance of Garcia did not change the disposition of the public.

"The composer," says Mme. Giorgi Righetti, "was weak enough to allow Garcia to sing beneath *Rosina's* balcony a Spanish melody of his own arrangement." Garcia maintained, that as the scene was in Spain, the Spanish melody would give the drama an appropriate local color; but unfortunately, the artist who reasoned so well, and who was such an excellent singer, forgot to tune his guitar before appearing on the stage as *Almaviva*. He began the operation in the presence of the public; a string broke; the vocalist proceeded to replace it, but before he could do so, laughter and hisses were heard from all parts of the house. The Spanish air, when Garcia was at last ready to sing it, did not please the Italian audience, and the pit listened to it just enough to be able to give an ironical imitation of it afterward.

The audience could not hiss the introduction to *Figaro's* air; but when Zamboni entered, with another guitar in his hand, a loud laugh was set up, and not a phrase of "Largo al fattotum" was heard. When *Rosina* made her appearance in the balcony, the public were quite prepared to applaud Mme. Giorgi Righetti in an air which they thought they had a right to expect from her; but only hearing her utter a phrase which led to nothing, the expressions of disapprobation recommenced. The duet between *Almaviva* and *Figaro* was accompanied throughout with hissing and shouting. The fate of the work seemed now decided.

At length *Rosina* reappeared, and sang the cavatina which had so long been desired; for Mme. Giorgi Righetti was young, had a fresh, beautiful voice, and was a great favorite with the Roman public. Three long rounds of applause followed the conclusion of her air, and gave some hope that the opera might yet be saved. Rossini, who was at the orchestral piano, bowed to the public, then turned toward the singer, and whispered, "Oh, natura!"

The entry of *Don Basilio*, now so effective, was worse than a failure the first night. Vitorelli's make-up was admirable; but a small trap had been left open on the stage, at which he stumbled and fell. The singer had bruised his face terribly, and began his admirably dramatic air with his handkerchief to his nose. This in itself must have sufficed to spoil the effect of the music. Some of the audience, with preternatural stupidity, thought the fall and the subsequent consequent application of the handkerchief to the face, was in the regular "business" of the part, and not liking it, hissed.

The letter-duet miscarried, partly, it appears, through the introduction of some unnecessary incident, afterward omitted; but the audience were resolved to ridicule the work, and, as often happens in such cases, various things occurred to favor their pre-determination.

At the beginning of the magnificent finale, a cat appeared on the stage, and with the usual effect. *Figaro* drove it one way, *Bartholo* another, and in avoiding *Basilio* it encountered the skirt of *Rosina*—behaved, in short, as a cat will be sure to behave mixed up in the action of a grand operatic finale. The public were only too glad to have an opportunity of amusing themselves, apart from the comedy; and the opening of the finale was not listened to at all.

The noise went on increasing until the curtain

fell. Then Rossini turned toward the public, shrugged his shoulders, and began to applaud. The audience were deeply offended by this openly-expressed contempt for their opinion, but they made no reply at the time.

The vengeance was reserved for the second act, of which not a note passed the orchestra. The hubbub was so great, that nothing like it was ever heard at any theatre. Rossini in the meanwhile remained perfectly calm, and afterward went home as composed as if the work, received in so insulting a manner, had been the production of some other musician. After changing their clothes, Mme. Giorgi Righetti, Garcia, Zamboni, and Botticelli went to his house to console him in his misfortune. They found him fast asleep.

The next day he wrote the delightful cavatina, "Ecco ridente il cielo," to replace Garcia's unfortunate Spanish air. The melody of the new solo was borrowed from the opening chorus of "Aureliano in Palmyra," written by Rossini, in 1814, for Milan, and produced without success; the said chorus having itself figured before in the same composer's "Ciro in Babilonia," also unfavorably received. Garcia read his cavatina as it was written, and sang it the same evening. Rossini, having now made the only alteration he thought necessary, went back to bed, and pretended to be ill, that he might not have to take his place in the evening at the piano. The charming melody which, in "Il Barbiere," is sung by *Count Almaviva* in honor of *Rosina*, is addressed by the chorus in "Aureliano" to the spouse of the grand *Osiris*, "Sposa del Grande Osiride," etc.

At the second performance the Romans seemed disposed to listen to the work of which they had really heard nothing the night before. This was all that was needed to insure the opera's triumphant success. Many of the pieces were applauded; but still no enthusiasm was exhibited. The music, however, pleased more and more with each succeeding representation, until at last the climax was reached, and "Il Barbiere" produced those transports of admiration among the Romans with which it was afterward received in every town in Italy, and in due time throughout Europe. It must be added, that a great many connoisseurs at Rome were struck from the first moment with the innumerable beauties of Rossini's score, and went to his house to congratulate him on its excellence. As for Rossini, he was not at all surprised at the change which took place in public opinion. He was as certain of the success of his work the first night, when it was being hooted, as he was a week afterward, when every one applauded it to the skies.

The tirana composed by Garcia: "Se il mio nome saper voi bramate," which he appears to have abandoned after the unfavorable manner in which it was received at Rome, was afterward re-introduced into the "Barber" by Rubini. It is known that the subject of the charming trio "Zitti, Zitti" does not belong to Rossini—or, at least, did not till he took it. It may be called a reminiscence of Rossini's youth, being note for note the air sung by *Simon* in Haydn's "Seasons," one of the works directed by Rossini at Bologna when he was still a student at the Lyceum.

Finally, the original idea of the air sung by the duenna *Berta* is taken from a Russian melody which Rossini had heard from the lips of a Russian lady at Rome, and had introduced into his opera for her sake. It is melodious, and above all lively; yet, occurring at a point in the drama where, for a time, all action ceases, it came to be looked upon as a signal for ordering ices.

Rossini wrote a trio for the scene of the music lesson, which has been either lost or (more probably) set aside by successive *Rosinas* who have preferred to substitute a violin concerto, or a waltz, or a national ballad, or anything else that the daughter of *Bartholo* would have been very likely to sing to her music-master. It is a pity that the trio cannot be recovered. *Rosina* might still sing a favorite air between the acts.

The original *Rosina*, by the way, Mme. Giorgi Righetti, had a mezzo soprano voice; indeed,

Rossini in Italy wrote none of his great parts for the soprano. When he first began to compose, the highest parts were taken by the sopranist, while the prima donna was generally a contralto—an arrangement somewhat suggestive of our burlesques, in which male parts are taken by women, female parts by men.

Rossini rose from the contralto (Mme. Malanotte in "Tancredi," Mme. Marcolini in "L'Italiana in Algeri,") to the mezzo soprano (Mme. Giorgi Righetti and Mlle. Colbran); but in his Italian operas, the part of *Matilda* in "Matilda di Sabran" is the only first part written for the soprano voice. *Amenaide*, the soprano of "Tancredi," is a lady of secondary importance, the chief female part being of course that of *Tancredi*.

About the Boston Music Hall.

Thus from his "Easy Chair," in *Harper's Magazine*, discourseth our old friend, GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS:

It is not, of course, possible that New York feels any chagrin that Boston has given the most colossal concert ever known upon the continent; but it is observable that, as wind and fire finally levelled the last timber of the Boston Coliseum in the dust, the first step was taken toward the Beethoven Centennial Celebration in New York. The project is not yet matured; but a vision of something very large indeed, something "metropolitan," begins to allure expectation; and Boston, having scored handsomely in the game, sits upon the ruins of her Coliseum and the profits of her Jubilee to see what New York will do.

If New York will build a proper hall for musical and other public purposes, she will do well, and the Beethoven Centennial will not be in vain. The Cooper Institute Hall is large enough for political meetings, and Steinway Hall is good for many purposes; but it is not a beautiful nor imposing room, as a great hall should be. The most impressive hall in the country is still the Boston Music Hall, where great height and two galleries, one above the other, with the organ and the imposing statue of Beethoven, give a fine feeling of dignity. But the Music Hall lacks one of the chief characteristics of a noble room for the purposes to which it is devoted, and that is, brilliancy. It is too dark. There is no smiling splendor of effect, which is always so enlivening. The darkness of the hall may be agreeable to weak eyes; it may even be described as "very much better than a glare of light"; but brilliancy remains an indispensable quality of a great hall devoted to popular enjoyment.

Yet, whether dark or light, how much has been enjoyed in that stately room! What memorable figures have passed across that platform! What exquisite strains of music, sung, played, or spoken, have died along those walls! No one who is familiar with our history for the last twenty years will sit in that hall for any purpose but suddenly he sees it crowded with a silent and attentive throng; sees a reading desk with vases of flowers, and a man of stately figure standing behind it, whose voice is deep and penetrating and sincere; whose words are things; who has a certain rustic shyness of movement, but whose sentences roll and flash like the volleys of a trained soldiery, and who stands in the warmth of his own emotion and the sympathy of his audience an indomitable gladiator, compelling the admiration even of his enemies as he fights with the Ephesian beasts. Against him, as he stands there every Sunday preaching to that vast multitude what seems to him the truth, and breaking to them what he believes to be the very bread of life, other men are preaching and praying, and the ex-communications of the Vatican against Luther, shorn of their thunder and lightning, are hurled. Who is he that judges motives and sincerity? We do not know in this world what is believed, but only what is said and done.

This man, with bald head set low upon high, square shoulders, who looks firmly at the great audience through spectacles, and speaks in a low, half nasal tone, visits the widows and fatherless, and keeps himself unsuspected from the world. What he believes, others may question. What he is, every aspiring soul must admire. Although almost every one of them would have theologially cast him out, and have recoiled from him with dismay, yet he preserves more than any other the traditional power and individuality of the old New England clergy. He applies the eternal truth, the moral law, as he feels it, to the life and times around him. They are heated white, and his words are blows of a sledge hammer to mould them into noble form. That dauntless mien is the true symbol of his mental aspect as he

confronts the menacing principalities and powers; and the man whose voice has so often charmed the crowded hall is one of the few who distinctly see and foretell the terrible war.

Long since his tongue is silent. He who came of the toughest stock, and might have looked to live almost a century, died when it was half spent. It may have seemed to the great throng easy to climb that platform and preach a sermon every Sunday morning; but to study early and late, as if he would master all knowledge—to write books, lectures, and speeches—to travel hard by night and day, losing his sleep and his food, and by the dim light in the ear still pushing out the frontiers of his learning—to deny himself exercise and needful rest while the mental tension was so constant and the moral warfare so intense—this was not easy; this was to violate all the laws of life, which none knew better; and suddenly the stretched harp string snapped, and there was no more music!

Not every one who knew his power knew into what sweetness and tenderness it could be softened, nor suspected that in the gladiator there was the loving and simple heart of the boy. Here, as the Easy Chair sits listening to the orchestra, it recalls the preacher when he was the minister of a rural parish, and used to come strolling through the fields and patches of wood to measure his wit with the friendly scholar who was the chief at Brook Farm, or to sit docile at his feet of counsel and sympathy. Or, again, it sees him in his country pulpit, the same sturdy, heroic athlete, trying and tempering the weapons with which he was to fight upon this larger scene. It was a noble character; a devoted, generous, inspiring life; a memory always hallowed in this hall. The conductor waves his baton! The symphony thunders from a hundred instruments, but through them all breathes the low tone of the remembered voice.

Fled is that music? Do I wake or sleep?

And as the concert proceeds, one of the series of the Harvard Musical Association, whose concerts are the musical pride of Boston, at which the performance is all of the purest classical music—so pure and so severe that the profane sometimes secretly ask whether melody in music is the unpardonable sin; and are peremptorily answered by the elect, "No; but rub-a-dub-dub and tum-ti-iddity are not music!"—as the concert proceeds it is surely a striking spectacle. The great hall, rather dimmer than ever because of the consciousness of daylight outside, is full of people, gathered in the afternoon, not only from the city, but from all the environs within twenty miles, and they sit as attentive and absorbed as a class of students at an interesting lecture. If, in such a concert, melody is not the unpardonable sin, whispering is. Woe betide a whisperer at a Harvard Musical! It were better for him, or even her, that the money for the tickets had been expended at the minstrels or the museum. You might as well be a forger, a swindler, a perjurer, a burglar in ordinary life, as to be a whisperer at a Harvard Musical. Yes—you might as well "speak right out in meetin'" itself as whisper here.

Such a disciplined audience, so quiet, so attentive, so susceptible to the slightest sigh of the oboe or wail of the violin, is a marvelous spectacle. They are hearing the finest and much of the freshest music in the world. They are not exactly sympathetic; perhaps the character of the music does not permit it. They applaud calmly, and, as it were, with reservations. It really seems sometimes that they approve the music rather than enjoy it. But the Easy Chair reflects with pride that the organizer of these concerts, if such a word may be used—and certainly with no exclusion of the cooperation which alone makes such concerts possible—is a Brook Farmer; and it complacently smiles upon the great multitude as unconscious pupils of that Arcadian influence.

And, indeed, in other days in this same city of Boston—in the halcyon days of the "Academy" concerts at the old Odeon, or still more ancient Boston Theatre—many of the Brook Farmers were often present in the flesh. Those were the days, or rather the nights, when Beethoven was truly introduced to America. Precluded with the pretty "Zanetta" overture by Auber, or with the "Serenade" or the "Domino Noir," or with Hérold's shrill "Zampa," or some strain which would not now be tolerated in the Harvard concerts, the Fifth Symphony was played until it became familiar. And the long, willowy Schmidt stood at the head directing, proud as a general commanding his column. In the audience, earnest, interested, attentive, sparkling with humor was Margaret Fuller, not hesitating, when the thoughtless girls whispered and giggled in the most solemn adagio strains, to lean over when the movement ended, and to say to the offenders, "But let us have our turn, too; some of us came to hear the music."

There, also, was the delegation from Brook Farm, in whose appearance it was plain to see that in Arcadia the hair was worn long, that the stiff cravat and collar were repudiated, and that woollen blouses were a mute protest against the body coats of a selfish and competitive civilization. Those young fellows walked in from the Farm and out again. They made nothing of ten miles or so each way under the winter stars. And with them and of them, already accomplished in the beautiful science, already familiar with the great works of the great composers, was the present tutelary genius of the Harvard concerts, whose life, consecrated as critic and lover to this art, has been a true service to his city, and, reflectively, to the country.

But even Boston does not deny the charm of Theodore Thomas's orchestra, and the delight of the New York Philharmonic music. Indeed, there was no audience which, from its training, was more authorized to judge the great excellence of the Thomas orchestra than that of the Harvard concerts. But when he went to Boston it was not a doubting Thomas. He did not play Bach and Beethoven only, but he tickled the amazed multitude with positive tunes. He raised his baton, and his varied orchestra, a single instrument in his magic grasp, consented to waltzes; or, like a cathedral choir becoming suddenly a lark, trilled airy roundelays, with which delighted, but not all assured of the propriety of delight, the audience smiled and shook, and the youngest catechumens even tapped time faintly with their feet! A sound which, could it be conceived audible in the midst of one of the Harvards, would probably cause such a shudder of horror that the hall itself would fall as by an earthquake.

Thus the Music Hall itself is a kind of symphony of memories. It is full of delightful ghosts. Among the visible figures there are a host of the unseen; and every singer, player, speaker, as he stands for an hour upon the platform, is measured by the masters of his art. But in the famous Peace Jubilee it had no part. Indeed the musical taste of which it is peculiarly the temple resisted the colossal and continuous concert with bells, anvils, and cannon as something monstrous, and as repulsive to true art as a huge and clumsy Eastern idol. But not even the finest taste of the Music Hall denied the impressiveness and grandeur of the result. New York, in the Beethoven Centennial, will have immense advantages. The musical resources of the city are truly "metropolitan," and such should the festival be.

Music in Rome.

[Correspondence of the Philad. Evening Bulletin.]

THE OPERA SEASON.—SGAMBATI'S MATINEES.—BEETHOVEN, SCHUMANN AND RAFF PLAYED BY ITALIANS.—PICTURE OF A ROMAN CONCERT ROOM.

ROME, Jan. 7, 1870.—Advent is over. This is a signal at Rome for all sorts of gaieties to begin. From now until Lent the opera, vaudeville and concerts have full sway. At the "Apollo," the opera house of the mode, they are giving Donizetti's *Leonora* and the *Brahma* ballet. I tried to rent a box in the dress-circle for the season—no other part of the house is proper for a lady, according to the *fiat* of the Roman Mrs. Grundy—but it was impossible. I shall have to bide my time, and pounce down on one some day when death or the departure of an ambassador leaves an opening. An opera director whom I know had to wait two years to get a box for his bride, and then seized on one by chance.

The opera is a necessity to a Roman lady. She does not care to go every night, but at least twice a week; and every woman of means and family expects to have her opera-box even more than her carriage. The first and third nights of an opera are the grand dress occasions. The second and fourth are off-nights. Many persons rent a box for every first or every first and third, or every fourth representation, and so on, as the affair suits their purse or convenience. A family, or two friends, will often divide the four representations between them. The season of the Carnival, as the present one is called, gives twelve operas, each one four times; thus offering a chance to every one. The off-nights are not so costly as the dress nights. If you rent a box, for example, for the fourth representation, you pay seventy scudi for the season of twelve nights. If you can get one for a first representation, you pay ninety scudi, or more.

When you cannot get a box for the season, you must watch for a chance when their owners are going to some ball, or are otherwise engaged. Almost every night there is a possibility of doing this, especially on off-nights. You cannot rent a single seat. You must take a whole box, which holds four persons comfortably. And it is a very nice thing to do, not only for your own pleasure, but for your friends, especially if you have not an establishment, and do not entertain, as almost every one does in Rome. An opera box makes honors easy between you and those to whom you owe agreeable debts of hospitality; and it is not a ruinous thing either.

The Sgambati matinees began on Wednesday. They will last for six weeks to two months, as they will take place once a week or fortnight. They are always delightful. Yesterday the programme was a string quartet of Beethoven (F major, op. 59, No. 1), one of those "three miracles," as the three quartets of the opus are called. Pinelli and his companions played it tolerably. They have improved since last season. But Italians never play Beethoven as Germans do. It is strange, for they play Schumann well; they seem to comprehend his music, but they execute Beethoven as if they were afraid of the poor old musical giant. The tradition remains among them that his music was once pronounced by artists of that day mystification and unplayable; they never forget it.

The second piece was Raff's Sonata in E minor, opus 73, for piano and violin—especially violin—like the fifteenth amendment's "*specialty Pomp*," as Pinelli's violin part was not equal to Sgambati's piano, and yet the composition exacted that it should be better. I did not like "*Pomp*." But the cream of the cup was the third and last piece—Schumann's quartet in E flat, opus 47, for piano, violin, alto and cello. The string performers played smoothly and true—they felt the influence of Sgambati's fine execution. The second movement struck me especially; it went off gloriously. But, indeed, the whole thing was played in perfect balance, and the piano was ruling power with Sgambati on the throne. Liszt came in for the cream with his friend, the handsome Hungarian Envoyé, a Monsignore with whom I have seen him so much lately. The great pianist made, as he always does, a little flutter. Liszt brings with him an indefinable influence that certainly does make the music go better; he is what these Italians call *sympatico*, and Sgambati especially feels it, I am sure, for when Liszt is present, he plays with an *elan* and pride that make his music charming to listen to, and Liszt's appreciation is magnetic.

But there is always a grotesque side to everything poetical, you know, and we had it at the concert, or at least I had, to perfection. Beside me sat a *fanatico per la musica*. He acted as if the music was specially for him; the audience was a vexatious intrusion; he would have turned us out if he could; he looked like a little terrier in pursuit of a rat, watching the whole. He applauded each musician as if he was their especial patron. Liszt's entrance had no effect on my *fanatico*, except to bore him; he knew nothing nor nobody greater than the music. It was a serious grumbling pleasure he took in it, however; and once, when there was a slight whisper in a far-off corner of the room, he rose up then and there, right in the middle of a movement, and uttered a furious "CHUT!" which startled us all half out of our senses. How Liszt lifted his eyebrows, and pouted out his tiger lips at him! But that made no difference to my neighbor; he cared for neither Piano King, nor Kaiser representative, nor Lord nor Lady; to him

"Musical life was real,
Musical life was earnest,
And conversation was not its goal."

The room in which these matinees are held is as old-fashioned as possible. It looks like a deserted drawing or ball-room—not a very handsome one either—turned into a music-room for the occasion. There is a chimney-place, with an old mirror; a rough uncarpeted platform is in a corner near one of the windows, with seats huddled together for the musicians, and not room

rough on it for the piano, which extended out in the audience part. Straw chairs are placed in rows against the wall, chimney recesses and around the piano and platform. There is a simple ingrain carpet on the floor, and an old chandelier which is never lighted. And this is the room they use year after year.

At the front entrance are a couple of gens d'armes; up stairs, two more gens d'armes. This gives style. A spruce little Buttons, who looks like a Roman *gamin* dressed up for the occasion, hands you a programme. One of the artists takes your shawl or coat and gives you a check for it, even though you may have your Jeemes Yellowplush following you with a foot-warmer, as some of the ladies have. Another artist receives your ticket, and very likely a third will offer you his arm, especially if you are a distinguished patroness, or one whose opinion he values. He will escort you into this poor little concert-room with all the grand Roman air, entertain you with a charming bit of conversation, and look all the time as if he was your condescending slave. A royal duke introducing you into the palace of his ancestors could not do it better or more naturally.

Before the concert is over, if the musicians cannot read their music, two or three wax candles are hunted out of a corner, or a pocket, or an instrument-box, and put into the tin candle-holders of the music-stands, more often awry than straight; but that is no matter to these Italians; they are all born artists, and consequently never do anything in an orderly way. But, after all, there is a charming picturesque effect produced, which makes you think of an old picture or an old stone.

The other afternoon, when the Schumann quartet was played after the second movement, while the applause was going on, these *dolce far niente* musicians were bowing and routing around at the same time for some candles, looking at each other helplessly. At last a piece of one was hauled out of a pocket, wrapped in paper, doubtless kept by the owner for going up and down the dark staircases of these Roman palazzi, which are never lighted, unless wealthy *forestieri* rent the apartments. At last three candles were mustered together out of hidden recesses, jammed into the rickety tins, and the music poured out its rich flood in the lovely andante. Heart and soul went into it; the artists played as much for their own pleasure as for that of their audience. Pinelli's rather commonplace Roman face grew very dreamy and interesting; the candle-light, mingled with the dim day, fell on Scambati's curious head and features, and made him look like an inspired Zingara. And the audience—Princesses whose names are in the Almanach de Gotha, lords and ladies and rich commoners, a distinguished prelate-ambassador, the great Liszt—about two hundred and fifty of us in all—were as happy as if we had been in a fine hall whose appointments were in keeping with the delightful music. And such a picture as it made—full of suggestions for fifty romances!

The Libretto of Der Freischuetz.*

A short time before his death (on the 25th June, 1844), Friedrich Kind published at Leipzig a work entitled *Das Freischütz-buch*, containing, besides the libretto of *Der Freischütz*, some curious details concerning the relations between Kind and his collaborator, Carl Maria von Weber, from which we extract the following particulars:

"Some time during the year 1816, Herr Schmiedel, *Kammermusicus*, called upon me, and brought with him a stranger dressed in black, and having a pale but clever face. Judging from his long arms, and his unusually developed hands, I at first took him for a pianist; it was Carl Maria von Weber. I was delighted at making his acquaintance; he had already a certain amount of reputation. He had set to music some popular songs taken from those of Herder and the Wun-

derborn, of Körner and myself. This had flattered me all the more, as, up to then, I had never had any communication with him. I knew, moreover, that he was to have the post of chapel-master at Dresden.

"The conversation became animated; we spoke of a variety of subjects. At length, Weber said to me: 'You must write me an opera.' The proposal made me laugh. I had tried my hand at various kinds of composition, it is true, but the notion of writing a libretto had never entered my head. I rather liked the idea; besides, it is my firm conviction that nothing ought to be impossible for a poet. I frankly confessed to Weber that I scarcely knew my notes. He said that that would make no difference. 'It is settled; we shall understand one another; we will arrange the rest some other time!' We took leave of each other like two old friends.

"Weeks and months passed by; I had all sorts of work to do, but this did not cause me to renounce my project. I remembered that certain of my poems had been set to music, and proved successful; I remembered, too, having read, somewhere or other, that, by being united with opera, tragedy would reach the acme of perfection. Lastly, Weber came and settled at Dresden, though I forget when.† He called and again spoke of my libretto. I at first affected unwillingness, but I did so like a girl who only desires to get married. I had often heard of the exacting disposition of composers, who look upon an opera merely from a musical point of view, and compel the author to introduce all sorts of modifications and alterations. I spoke out frankly to Weber on the subject. 'I will set your book,' he said, 'just as you send it in, of that I give you my word; as for details, which will require simply a stroke of the pen, you will, out of friendship to me, not refuse to change them.'

"The question was now to find a subject; I wanted a popular one, suited to Weber's peculiar kind of talent and my own. We looked through Museums and a Benedictus; collections of romances and of tales. At length we decided on Apel's *Freischütz*, but we afterwards gave it up. The censure was severe; the subject might be considered dangerous, as tending to propagate superstitious ideas. Besides, in Apel's story, the lovers die. This would not be allowed on the stage. All these difficulties discouraged us, and we parted without coming to any determination.

"But the notion had taken a firm hold of me; my heart beat high; I paced up and down my room, exciting my imagination with the fresh poetry of the forests and of popular legends. At length, the mists cleared away, and the dawn began to appear. That same evening, or the next morning very early, I ran off to Weber. 'I will do *Freischütz* for you. I will tackle the devil himself! I go back; I will have nothing modern. We are living at the end of the Thirty Years' War, in the midst of the Forests of Bohemia. A pious hermit has appeared to me! The white rose is a protection against the Demon hunter! Innocence comes to the aid of the strong one, when the latter is hesitating; hell succumbs, and Heaven is triumphant!' I narrated my plot at length, and we flung ourselves in each others' arms, exclaiming: 'Long live our *Freischütz*!'

M. Edmond Neukomm relates (*History of Der Freischütz*, Paris, A. Faure, 1867) how the two friends came to quarrel after the triumph achieved by their work at Berlin, on the 18th June, 1821:—

"Weber had only returned a short time to Dresden, when his recent joy was succeeded by a feeling of sorrow, caused by the susceptibility of his collaborator, Kind.

"Kind accused Weber of not having brought him sufficiently forward, and, in addition, with having used him merely for his own ends. It was in vain that Weber appealed to their old friendship, and reminded him of his letters immediately after the first representation of their work at Berlin. But nothing was of any avail.

† He left Berlin on the 12th January, 1817, and arrived the next evening at Dresden.

Quite the contrary: just as the success of *Der Freischütz* increased, the greater was the amount of dissatisfaction manifested by Kind, who, at length gave full vent to his feelings. It was at the end of 1821. *Der Freischütz* had made its way triumphantly through all Germany; it had been represented simultaneously at every large theatre in that country. Its success had everywhere proved the same, immense and nearly unopposed; the work had, in consequence, brought in the sum of 1,693 thalers to its author, in less than six months. Weber thought this was the time for making another attempt at reconciliation with his friend Kind. He wrote him a charming letter, one of those letters which he so well knew how to write, a letter which was dictated by the heart from beginning to end. Considering his embarrassed circumstances, Weber begged Kind to accept thirty ducats, a sum equal to that they had fixed for Kind's share, and which had been paid. . . . 'My dear fellow, allow me to slip this into your hand, and promise me you will lay it out in some way agreeable to yourself, and to your friends, so that I may see my sole object in sending it gratified, namely: a wish to please you.'

"But Kind was not in the slightest degree touched by Weber's delicacy. He returned the present, accompanied by a letter, in which he complains of composers, who purchase a poem dirt cheap, and then consider the business settled, while they continue to enable every one else, singers, machinists, choristers, and even lamp-men, to profit by the large sums the opera brings in. He summed up by saying that a person worthy of belief, had stated that Count Brühl had sent 800 thalers for him, but that he had not seen a rapp. He returned, therefore, the thirty ducats to Weber, and looked upon the business as terminated. Weber kept his sorrow to himself, and said nothing."

Pauline Lucca.

An instance of the revolution which the possession of a fine voice will effect upon the poorest fortunes is given in the career of Mme. Pauline Lucca. Like Mlle. Nilsson, the Baroness von Rahden owes her prosperity to exceptional natural abilities discovered among humble surroundings. Her youth was passed in poverty. The necessities of her family drove the little child to eke out subsistence by dancing in the Vienna Hoftheatre ballet, where she received more rebuffs than praises—rebuffs amounting often to positive cruelty. In 1850 the child of eight was scolded and threatened by the ballet master: even her parents' religion (they were Jews) being added to the scoffs of which the German language is so susceptible. Little Pauline was stupid, or wilful, and was ultimately rejected as useless for a dancer. In this extremity a relative who possessed some means offered to have her educated for a governess. She was sent to school, where she fared ill, according to her own account, published in a foreign paper from which we take some few particulars of her life. The story of her school-life is contained in a letter to a friend. She says:

"When I first entered the school I was scarcely nine years old. Some years before, as the child of a well-to-do merchant, I had attended school, but now learned the difference between such a position and my present standing. It was a long time before I could drill my childish heart to endure in silence all the humiliations to which I was subjected. But a triumph lay in store for me. As the time for the examination drew near, teachers and scholars were in continual excitement. I, alone, beheld the preparations with indifference, because certain I would be considered too insignificant to be questioned. Every day, from twelve until one o'clock, we were practised in singing; not in the form of regular musical instruction, but simply required to follow the air played on a violin, and drilled like so many canary birds. I was never allowed to sing, but served the teacher as a music stand, holding his notes for him. Everything was finally prepared, and the august day arrived. I remember how awed we were by the appearance of the principal in a new cap of extraordinary construction. We were required to dress alike, and trouble enough my poor mother had had to meet the expense of my outfit. The guests were assembled; the girls were ranged on benches—I in a corner behind the others—and the terrible man, the Examiner, proceeded to business. A solitary question was put to me just when I had arranged myself most com-

* From *Le Guide Musical*.

fortably to overlook the room. Of course, as I had not the least idea of the proper answer, I replied at random, and sat down again amid the scornful laughter of my fellow-scholars, and the frowns of my teachers. The Examiner alone seemed intensely amused, as if he considered the reply especially appropriate. I was again aroused by the rising of the whole school preparatory to singing. I looked up and saw my mother directly before me, the tears rolling down her face, and looking reproachfully at me. For the first time I was really mortified, and the thought flashed through my mind: How can I make up for that stupidity? I had been forbidden even the privilege of holding the notes at my examination, but with the assurance of fate, my heart urged me to go forward with the rest to sing.

"Quick as thought I advanced, heedless of the curious looks of the teachers. After the others had, parrot-like, gone over the songs required, the Examiner, whom I had earnestly, wistfully stared at during the singing, turned suddenly to me, with the question: 'Now, what can you sing?' 'Ach! every thing the others have sung—every thing,' answered I, sturdily.

"So, so! then sing this!"

"It was a little air which I disliked; I turned up my pug nose, but sang it; then instantly asked permission to sing the *Ave Maria*, which, being the most difficult, had been omitted by the others. Permission was granted, and seizing the notes with the eagerness of one determined at one stroke to make amends for the past, I sang that simple but inexpressibly touching composition; (even now when I sing it the tears spring to my eyes). How did I sing? I do not know—only this much I remember, that as I ended I found myself caught in the arms of the Examiner, who, between tears and kisses, exclaimed, 'Child, thou hast sung like an angel!' I turned to my schoolmates, to meet only sour, envious faces—but one little girl ran up to embrace me and congratulate me. My mother was in a flutter of delight, and could not sufficiently express her wonder."

From the day when Pauline proved at school the possession of at all events one talent in an admirable degree, her vocation was decided. She was at once made a member of the chorus connected with the Kärnthner Theater, and half a dozen years later she made her first impression upon the public. She was seventeen, when in October, 1857, she sang the role of the first bridesmaid in "*Der Freischütz*." We are indebted to her again for a description of this important evening. The theatre was crowded to excess, and away up on "*Olympus*" sat a little, dried up, weather-beaten Jew, anxiously waiting for the moment of his child's success, for she had assured him she meant to create such a *furor* as to incite the manager to engage her for the rendition of the second best parts. She has not greatly altered since that time in personal appearance—is now, as then, a plump, graceful figure, with large, brilliant, blue-grey eyes, shadowed by long black lashes, and arched by boldly defined brows. She entered, leading the bridal chorus, and kneeling before Agathe, began the well-known melody in such a joyous, dashing, lark-like fashion, that the audience broke out in tumultuous applause. Such a rendition they had never before heard, and the little leader was called to the front of the stage to repeat the song. When the curtain finally fell, and the little old man waited impatiently at the door of the chorus green-room, Pauline flew out with the delightful news that she was engaged at six hundred guilders yearly to sing the lesser solo parts. It was, however, necessary that the orchestral conductor, Eckert, should first test her voice. This he did the following day, and pronounced the astonishing judgment that she possessed neither voice nor talent, and must remain in the chorus. Pauline has never lacked spirit, so she stamped her little foot in a rage, crying out that she had both voice and talent, and would show him sometime what he had lost; furthermore, she would never sing in the chorus again—and never again in Vienna. She persuaded her father to leave Vienna, and six months later we find her prima donna of the theatre of Olmütz. Here, during that winter she studied eighteen new parts, running the gamut of impersonations, from the tragic to the most extravagant soubrette. From Olmütz she went to Prague, where the intendant of the Royal Opera in Berlin discovered her—a happy man when he coaxed the rare bird to remove to that city. Since 1861 she has been attached, under a life-long contract, to the Royal Opera of the Prussian capital. The little Vienna Jewess—Pauline Lucca—has become the Christian Pauline Lucca, since a few years back the wife of the Baron von Rahden.

From the first evening of her appearance on the Berlin stage, she has been adored by the enthusiastic Berlin public. Whether personating *Margaret, Selika, Valentine, Leonora*, or the many other characters for which she is fitted, she is as successful in her won-

derful influence upon her audience. There are greater artists in so far as the brilliant execution of astonishing trills and painfully wonderful staccato measures goes for music, but there are few such singers as Pauline Lucca. It is her peculiar talent to merge all individuality in the rendition of the character she may be performing—it is never Pauline, it is always *Margaret, Selika, Valentine* we see and hear. She is utterly free from affectations of any sort, and her great success is mainly due to her being always so simply, charmingly natural.

Her house as that of the Baroness von Rahden, is one of the most popular among the aristocracy of Berlin, and, although she gives delightful balls, dancing still remains her weakness—she likes it no better than when an eight-year old child. By a strange freak of fate the same operatic conductor who pronounced such severe judgment upon her in Vienna is now occupying the same position in Berlin. For the past year, the Baroness has been suffering from a disease of the throat, which has prevented her interpretation of the more important musical roles.—*Orchestra.*

Lefebure Wely.

By the death of this great virtuoso, aristocratic and elegant Paris has lost its own particular organist. I mean that one among contemporary organists whose talent was a more faithful expression than that of any one else of a class of persons of the present epoch, who pursue the road to Heaven with every possible regard to their own comfort. This favor, this reputation was something he saw spring up and grow without much effort on his part, for he simply obeyed his artistic temperament, and followed the impulses of a lively disposition, and of an extraordinarily fertile imagination.

Lefebure (Louis James Alfred), born at Paris, the 13th November, 1817, was the son of an organist of St. Roch. It is very certain that he knew his notes and the key-board before he knew his letters. At the age of eight, he played his first mass. When he was fifteen, he acted as his father's substitute, and about the same time, carried off at the Conservatory, where he had Halévy for master, the prizes for organ, counterpoint and fugue. It was on the organ of St. Roch that he began to indulge in his picturesque and daring extempore playing, always elegant, and sometimes grand and elevated; it placed him at the head of a new school, which possesses the secret of combining, in due proportions, melody and sentiment with science.

On being appointed organist to the Madeleine, in 1847, he found an instrument of Cavaille-Coll's. Its resources, until then ignored, were destined to put it in his power to realize all his inspirations. With what ardor, with what skill, did he not assist the impulse given to the organ building of modern times by physical science! By constant application, he acquired the art of combination, exquisite taste, a happy mixture of the different stops, an inexhaustible variety of sonorous effect, and, lastly, his mechanical virtuosity. He found, too, in this church, select, delicate and impressionable hearers, who responded to his natural inclinations, and mundane tastes, and, by their suffrages, furnished with wings his exhibitions of extempore playing.

Lefebure was at the apogee of his reputation, when, in the month of April, 1863, he took possession of the great organ at St. Sulpice. In his new position, he found himself exposed to the jealousy of his rivals, and to a fresh outburst of criticism. The principal charges against him were the want of religious character in his ideas, and their petulance; these, however, constituted a great portion of the secret by which he achieved success in a church, the services of which should be distinguished by a great austerity of character. He could not bring himself not to shine, not to please, not to "faire diversion," and for this he sacrificed seriousness. The mathematical side of his art, the cold and inflated style [!] of the fugue, damped his dashing nature. Not that he ignored or did not appreciate these things; far from it. In his notebook, under the date of May, 1865, I read: "I extemporized to day an interminable fugue for them; I hope they will not now say that I can play only polkas! He was a profound harmonist, and no one was more capable of coming back to his melody, by a series of chords, sometimes astonishingly daring. On other occasions, a simple modulation sufficed to carry him away from his original theme. Yet, such was his love for art, that he neglected nothing which could contribute to expand and embellish the theme. For instance, every Sunday he used to read over the particular Offertory of the day, and then extemporized according to the sense and character of the words. Ought not every good organist to do the same. His extempore playing was, indeed, the accentuated re-echo of his nervous disposition. He en-

tranced and carried away even those who did not like his manner. Rossini said to him one day, very justly: "People like you much more for your faults than for your good qualities."

A blade so thoroughly tempered naturally wore out the scabbard. On the organ at St. Sulpice, an organ requiring a great deal of physical strength, Lefebure, whose health was already much shaken, expended his energies with an ardor that accelerated his end. He was eaten up by fever; his extempore playing revealed his state. "He seemed to fear," as our colleague, Hip. Prevost wrote, the other day, "that he would not have sufficient time to sing, in his own harmonious language, all the melodies in his soul." The moment arrived, however, when he was compelled to beg M. Louis Dessane, the organist of the choir, to take his place "up there;" when he was compelled to trust his reputation to that gentleman, as distinguished as modest, whom, during his lifetime, he designated as his successor—and this artistic testament will, doubtless, be carried out. It was only with great difficulty that Lefebure could now ascend the steep stairs leading to the organ loft. One day, not long since, he promised to perform at a marriage, and he wished to keep his word. He was, therefore, laboriously making his way up, when suddenly the sound of the blow, given by the Swiss with his halberd, announced the commencement of the ceremony. In less time than is required to write down the fact, the gallant artist ran up forty steps, and, bathed in perspiration, and suffering from a cough which brought the blood tinged foam to his lips, he placed his hands upon the keyboard. He was never, perhaps, grander. It was his last piece of extempore playing; the farewell of the organist to the organ, the strains of which are like an echo of the Infinite.

Lefebure-Wely wrote a great deal for his instrument; for the harmonium; and for the voice. I will cite merely his "Cantiques," which are exceedingly well known; a remarkable "O Salutaris;" a collection of "Offertories;" some pieces composed expressly for the Mustel Harmonium; a fantasia entitled *Titanis*, for piano; the "Duo sympathique," dedicated to his two daughters, &c. At the Opera Comique, he brought out a work, *Les Recruteurs*, in which Capoul made his first appearance, but which was not a success. It is but a few days since that, with a hand already struck by death, he traced his last compositions: "*La chant du Cygne*," a melancholy reverie, for pianoforte and harmonium, in which we perceive very plainly the presentiment of his approaching death. He has left some posthumous works. "In all that he composed"—as M. Ambroise Thomas, a most competent judge, proclaimed, at the tomb—"we must always admire the grace, the good taste, the purity of the style. He has left works, noble in character, and elevated in sentiment, which will bear evidence of his passage among us, and of the influence he must have exerted." A sure, devoted, and faithful friend; endowed with cutting frankness, tempered, however, by a large amount of kindness; an amiable companion; generous with the calculating spirit peculiar to musicians; witty and caustic like a real child of Paris, as he was, and, moreover, a spoilt child of Paris: of naturally distinguished manners, an enemy of everything trivial and commonplace; possessing, like all men on whom fortune smiles when they are young, a very strong opinion of himself individually, and never neglecting an opportunity of declaring his own merit:—such, with well-directed activity, and exceeding versatility of humor, is the complete physiognomy of Lefebure-Wely, whose reputation extended to foreign countries, especially Germany.

This valiant and sincere artist has left his mark. In the gallery of organists of St. Sulpice, in which Nivert represents correctness; Clerebault, majesty; Coppeau, religious unction; Nicolas Séjan, elevated thought; Louis Séjan, elegance of form; and Georges Schmitt, impetuosity, and brilliancy; Lefebure Wely may claim many of the qualities of his predecessors, adding the radiant charm of melody, and the scintillations of a most charming fancy.

He leaves many sympathizing friends, whose feelings of esteem are now, alas! directed exclusively to his two charming daughters, his son, and his wife, herself an eminent artist, who appreciated him so well, and loved him so much.

EM. MATHIEU DE MONTER.

Musical Correspondence.

NEW YORK, JAN. 25.—On Wednesday evening of last week Mlle. MEHLIG gave a very interesting concert at Steinway Hall, assisted by Messrs. Kopta and Bergner, and by a female vocalist. I quote the instrumental numbers:

P. F. Trio, B flat, op. 97.....Beethoven.
Nocturne, F minor, op. 55, No. 1.....Chopin.
Prelude and Fugue in G minor (arr. by Liszt).....Bach.
Variations Brillantes, (Violin).....Vieuxtemps.
Carneval, op. 9.....Schumann.
Grande Polonaise.....F. Liszt.

The fine Trio, with its wonderfully beautiful Adagio, was well played, but the hall is too large to admit of one's enjoying anything in the way of chamber-music. Mlle. Mehlig seemed at times a little tame, especially in the first movement; but it was impossible to say as much with regard to her performance of the extremely difficult Fugue which she certainly gave with most admirable force and vigor. This was also true of the "Carneval," in which she showed herself a really great artist. The scope for expression and shading is so vast, and the changes of tempo and character are so frequent, that none but a thoroughly competent and self-poised artist should ever attempt to play these little gems which Schumann called "Carneval." At times indeed we could desire more abandon, but then one cannot have every thing, and her touch is certainly exquisitely delicate and yet firm. I did not exactly approve of her manner of playing the Chopin Nocturne, for she certainly took too much liberty with the tempo, and her indiscriminate use (or misuse) of the pedal was quite painful.

Mr. Kopta played delightfully. His tone is so good and accurate that one is delighted with its purity, albeit a little more strength would be agreeable. He played several double note passages in a masterly manner.

Mr. Bergner played carefully and well, but at times his 'cello seemed the least bit out of tune.

As for the "Vocalist"—who evidently sang her two solos in order to "fill out" the programme—in simple charity let me decline to say anything more than that she has neither voice nor method, and cannot sing at all.

The audience numbered something like 1,800 people, and most of them (not being Americans) paid marked attention to the programme as it was performed.

Musical matters are very dull here this winter, and if it were not for the Philharmonics I should be in despair. Theo Thomas has, in a mysterious way, disappeared from public gaze, and his "Symphony Soirées" (very delightful but very non-paying entertainments) have gone with him; this is also true of the Sunday Evening concerts, which were so enjoyable for the last two winters, but which are not even mentioned this season. Then we no longer have any Mason and Thomas' Soirées of chamber music; they were discontinued winter before last; the Harmonic Society and the Mendelssohn Union (our choral societies) seem to be either dead or hopelessly lethargic.

F.
FEB. 7. On Saturday evening we had our 3d Philharmonic Concert, with the appended programme:

Symphony: "Consecration of Sounds".....Spohr.
Cavatina, "Da placher".....Gazza Ladra.....Rosini.
Miss Clara L. Kellogg.
P. F. Concerto, E flat major, No. 5.....Beethoven.
Mlle. Anna Mehlig.
Overture, Sacuntala.....Goldmark.
Aria, "Del vinci," Nozze di Figaro.....Mozart.
Overture, Leonora, No. 2.....Beethoven.

The orchestral playing was in every respect excellent, and too much praise cannot be given to the perfect unity with which every movement of the elaborate Symphony was performed. To my mind this celebrated work of Spohr's is less attractive than it is to many musicians, and the merits of the composition seem very unequally distributed; as for instance, the 2nd movement—Cradle-Song, Serenade, &c.,—with its curious mixed rhythm, is certainly a "gem of purest ray serene," while the "Marche" is totally out of keeping with any thing else, and is indeed, to my mind, even trivial.

The "Sacuntala" Overture, performed for the first time in this country, is essentially Frenchy in its effect, and therefore not immensely solid or forceful.

There are some neat bits of instrumentation, and there are some harp passages which might possibly have been attractive if the sound of the harp had not been entirely drowned out by the other instruments; as a whole, very suggestive of Batiste's elaborate and frothy organ voluntaries.

Mlle. Mehlig achieved an artistic success in her performance of Beethoven's superb Concerto, which was played at one of our concerts last winter by Mr. Mills. Her excellences are a wonderfully delicate touch, an admirably even technique, and a poetic spirit which always grasps the meaning and plan of the composer. Her one especial weakness is a lack of breadth in style and phrasing. This deficiency was more especially evident in the final movement, which unquestionably requires great strength and force to give the requisite dignity and grandeur.

Mlle. M. was enthusiastically encored, in fact called out three times, but she declined to play again, and only acknowledged the compliment by bowing.

Miss Kellogg sang her two selections creditably and well, and had she been less self-conscious and "airy" would have made a pleasing impression. O that she would only listen to reason, and try to tone down her exuberant self-gratulatory manner, for she really is not a great artist, and no amount of printed encomiums will make her one; neither will that end be gained by the purchase of any number of floral testimonials, by previous arrangement among enthusiastic admirers. She was encored, and sang, in response, a trifling and totally incongruous "Chanson," Carl Bergmann—much to the surprise and satisfaction of the audience—playing the pianoforte accompaniment.

CHICAGO, FEB. 5.—Very few occurrences in a musical way are just now to be noted here. Since my former letter the Ritchings English Opera Troupe gave a season of three weeks at McVicker's Theatre, a little old-fashioned, rather inconvenient place for an audience, but, as I am told, a very good stage, and a good house for sound. The usual category of "Bohemian Girl," "Maritana," "Martha," "Trovatore," and "Crown Diamonds" was gone through with, and further, "Faust," "The Postillion of Lonjumeau," "The Huguenots," and "Traviata."

The vocal resources of this combination were not extravagant. The principals are, as you know, Mrs. Bernard herself, Miss Howson (whom I did not hear), Mrs. Annie Kemp Bowler, Mr. Bowler, the Peakes, Mr. Bernard, and Henry Drayton. The chorus was very spirited, but very small. The orchestra was an indigenous growth, the product of a part of the city not yet "raised to grade," and so I forbear criticism. Mr. Behrens was said to direct; how well, I cannot say, not knowing how badly they could have played but for his restraining hand. Mr. Behrens must enlarge his repertory of high Dutch expletives, or give up the direction of a Chicago orchestra. These men are said to be hired at the rate of so much a cubic foot of tone. The kettle drummer gets the largest pay; the trombone next.

The costumes were really splendid. And however the ensemble might fall below what one could desire for the heavier operas, there was in every performance (except "Faust") much to admire, enough, indeed, to repay the listener. There is one performance to which I wish to call your especial attention when they visit Boston, and that is *La Traviata*. The scene in the second act between Mrs. Bernard (*La Traviata*) and Mr. Drayton (*Georgie Germont*), and afterwards between Drayton and Bowler (*Alfredo*), was done the most perfectly of any operatic performance I ever saw. I have many times heard better voices than either, although these are pleasant to hear; but so complete a realization of what must have been the dramatist's intention, so lively a representation of the grieving father, and the loving, heart-broken woman, I never saw. It did not seem acting. Mrs. Bernard and Drayton did admirably

throughout the season. Every single personation of Drayton's was a new revelation to us; one would not dream that *Plunkett* in "Martha" and *Germont* were rendered by the same man.

The ORATORIO SOCIETY gave the *Messiah*, Jan. 27 and 28, to very good houses. Chicago is yet too poor to afford an organ in a public hall, so we had only orchestral accompaniment. This Society was organized last Spring and has a chorus of about three hundred. The President is Mr. Geo. L. Dunlap, a solid man; the Secretary, Mr. O. Blackman, Principal of Musical Instruction in our public schools. The musical direction has been from the first in the hands of Hans Balatka, who holds with us much the same relation that Zerrahn does in Boston.

The *Messiah* was given here about ten years ago by the Musical Union, under the direction of Mr. C. M. Cady (Root & Cady). The chorus numbered seventy and the orchestra fifteen. Since then it has not been attempted till now. Indeed until the Young Men's Christian Association built Farwell Hall, there was no good place in which to hold concerts or rehearsals of a large choral society; our only reliance was the churches, and these are always liable to be taken with a revival at inopportune times; (although Dr. Hatfield thinks the Chicago churches are as free from that as any he knows.) Now, however, we have Farwell Hall, which, although deficient in the staid blue-stock air of your Music Hall, is yet a pleasant, commodious, and feasible place of gathering. The chorus on this occasion went well. The alto was too light. The tenor and bass was splendid! The soprano good enough. The orchestra did well in the choruses and fairly in the solos. The poor trumpeters had a "hard row" of it in the trumpet song; but Mr. Whitney came through with very little apparent regard to the abnormal developments behind him. And this Mr. Whitney (M. W.), Mr. Editor, quite captivated our city. His voice is so resonant, his method so broad and artistic, and his presence so proper, that we have nothing to do but to envy Boston the possession of so admirable an artist. Miss Brainard did the soprano solos in her usual excellent way. The alto got sick at just the wrong time, so we left her parts out. The quartet altos were taken by Miss Mary Holden. Mr. Jas. Whitney sang his parts very much to the audience's satisfaction, except a certain suspicion of nasal quality in the tone, and too much tremolo. On the whole, however, Chicago is glad to get him. The Society proposes to take up *Elijah* or the *Hymn of Praise*.

DER FREYSCHUETZ.

Dwight's Journal of Music.

BOSTON, FEB. 12, 1870.

Concerts.

The seventh of the SYMPHONY CONCERTS, crowded of course, was a fair fulfilment of the following programme:

Overture to "The Water Carrier".....Cherubini.
Choruses for Male Voices:
a. Priestchor: "O Isis and Osiris," from "The Magic Flute".....Mozart.
b. Foresters' Chorus, from "The Pilgrimage of the Rose".....Schumann.
Orpheus Musical Society.
P. F. Concerto, No. 3, C minor, op. 37.....Beethoven.
Miss Alice Dutton.
Symphony in C major.....Schubert.

One of the newspaper critics merely mentions the Cherubini Overture *en passant* as a pretty thing. It is one of the great Overtures, and season after season has been slowly but surely winning the recognition of the many, as it did of the few in the first season of the Concerts; a work of rare nobility and beauty, and seemeth better upon every hearing. With still more emphasis may this be said of the great Schubert Symphony in C,—his Ninth and last—the one of "the heavenly length," as Schumann said; a work in

which his genius seems to have tried the strength of its wings and found them equal to the highest and the longest flight, new aspiration still begotten of new triumph. After the brooding, earnest, self-suppressed, deep planning and resolving introduction, how the heroic, high-strung rhythm, strong enough for all the wealth of harmony with which it is weighted, sweeps away with you and bears you on from glory unto glory, as on a joyous and unlimited excursion amid starry clusters of new worlds! Perpetual surprise,—the more so that the same rhythm is kept up and the same motives constantly return. After the wonderful Andante, a long and complete poem in itself, the same exhaustless, soaring and adventurous energy, striking out new paths, new rhythms, in the Scherzo (with its delicious Trio, as if touching for a moment upon one of the Happy Isles) and the Finale, with those thundering reiterations in the basses, sustains itself unflagging to the end. The whole Symphony reveals a great state of mind, an inward realization of the soul's richest life, which it seems marvellous that any man could so sustain throughout so long and arduous a work. The Symphony was remarkably well played, and it is the universal testimony of those who have heard it many times, that still the last impression is more glorious than all before.

The entire C-minor Concerto of Beethoven had never been played here before. Mr. Lang, in the second season of the Concerts, played the first movement only, which is certainly the most significant, with the Cadenza by Moscheles. This time his fair pupil, Miss DUTTON, allowed us to hear the whole, using in the first part the fine Cadenza written by Carl Reinecke. The *Largo*, although full of beauty and of tender feeling, is not of Beethoven's best; its perpetual figures of embellishment seem commonplace for him, and such as Hummel or some others might have written. The Finale, however, common as its gay and piquant motive sounds, is full of delicate and fine originality. Miss Dutton won much praise by the performance, showing marked improvement, though the strength flagged a little near the end, and there was sometimes want of clearness, of self-possession, quiet strength in the left hand.

The Orpheus, now under Mr. ZERRAHN's direction, numbered some forty voices, rich, resonant, well blended, and sang better than we have heard them for some years. The fresh and breezy "wood notes wild" of Schumann's chorus, all in praise of forest life, caught new animation and a poetic tinge from the accompanying horns and bass trombone, the peculiar rhythm of whose passages seems to have misled a critic of the *Advertiser* into the impression that they stammered and blundered in the execution; they are meant to come in somewhat tumultuously, with crossing and commingling echoes as it were.

Next Thursday's Concert offers us: Symphony in G minor, Mozart; Unfinished Symphony, Schubert; Overtures: "Melusina," by Mendelssohn, and "Wood Nymph," Bennett; Serenade, from a Quartet, (for all the strings), Haydn; Piano Concerto in D, (first time), Mozart, played by Mr. Hermann Daum.

Mr. J. C. D. PARKER resumes his TRIO CONCERTS, on successive Saturday evenings, at Chickering's. We felt it to be a real privation that we had to lose the first one, which took place last Saturday evening; but we have no hesitation in endorsing what we find said of it and of him in the *Advertiser* of Monday:

It is pleasant to say a word about Mr. James C. D. Parker, whose artistic career all of us who care for our city's progress in other and better things than the increase in population and wealth must watch with interest. Born and bred in Boston, he has done his best to repay the debt which every one owes to his birth place and home, and we should find it hard to name another native Bostonian who has accomplished so much for the cultivation among us of pure musical art and taste.

His first trio concert of the season was given at Chickering's Hall on Saturday evening. Listemann with the violin, and Heindl with the cello, played so well that our regret that the great West has swallowed Schultze and Wulf Fries was sensibly diminished. Mrs. Barry, always Mr. Parker's right-hand woman, sang a recitative and air by Paisiello and a couple of Mendelssohn songs as our best contralto should. She is singing this winter in some respects better than ever before. The trios were Haydn's in A flat and Beethoven's in E flat.

Mr. Parker himself, beside his part in the trios, played a Nocturne of Chopin and a charming little novelette (whatever that is in music) by Schumann. And all that he did was done excellently. We have often thought that Mr. Parker does not appear at his best in a concerto in the great hall, (though, we confess we almost changed our mind after his rendering of the Mendelssohn concerto at the Symphony concert last month,) because his playing is so very quiet,—so severely undemonstrative. It is not that it lacks warmth, so much as that it has not always flash and sparkle enough to hold its own against the full orchestra. But here, in a chamber concert, his exquisite refinement and taste give an admirable account of themselves. They are worth all the virtuosity in the world. We hope that our readers will not neglect the remaining concerts of the set, which will be given on the three following Saturday evenings.

MR. PERABO, in his third Matinée (Friday, Feb. 4), played to the great satisfaction of a large and appreciative audience, the following selections:

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| Suite, op. 24. C sharp minor. Wm. St. Bennett | |
| a) Presto e leggiero. d) Alla Fantasia. | |
| b) Allegretto leggiero. e) Presto agitato. | |
| c) Agitato assai. f) Lento ed Allegro. | |
| "Vier Clavierstücke," op. 5. Otto Dresel. | |
| No. 2, Präludium. G flat major. | |
| No. 4, Scherzino. F major. | |
| Etude en forme de Variations, op. 13. C sharp minor. | |
| Rob. Schumann. | |
| Sonata, op. 10, No. 3. D major. Beethoven. | |
| a) Presto. c) Menuetto, Allegro. | |
| b) Largo e mesto. d) Rondo Allegro. | |

The Suite by Bennett is not an imitation of the old dance forms of Bach and Handel's day, but simply an agreeable succession of short, graceful fancies altogether modern in their features. Two or three of them were strikingly beautiful, but the series as a whole, though pleasing, not particularly inspiring. The two little pieces by Mr. Dresel were like old friends to most, and very welcome; a graceful tribute of the younger to the older artist, whose long absence is so much felt.

That Etude by Schumann is a remarkable piece of Variation work, truly creative developments of a theme that has much in it; at every change it gives you something new and of deep import. A very difficult work withal, but not so to Perabo. The selection from Beethoven's earlier Sonatas was a happy one. We are not sure that it has found its way into our concert rooms before, although a favorite in private. The contrast of its weighty and impressive *Largo*, in 6/8 time, with the light, airy elegance of the Minuet and Trio, and of both with the impetuous opening *Presto* and concluding *Rondo*, is very fine, and never lets the interest flag. It was admirably rendered, though the intensity of the player now and then betrayed him into an apparently unconscious hurrying of the tempo for a few measures at a time.

At the last Matinée (next Friday), Mr. Perabo will play a Sonata in A minor by Mozart, something by Schumann (op. 23), and again, what will be particularly welcome, the last Sonata (op. 111) of Beethoven.

ENGLISH OPERA. If the Parepa Rosa Company had done nothing else, the manner in which they can perform the "Marriage of Figaro" (as they have done three times in the Boston Theatre) fully establishes their right to the remarkable success they have had here and elsewhere. Of course we would much rather hear Mozart's delicious music sung in the Italian; but with this single drawback, and in spite of it, the presentation of that rare work of pure imaginative genius as a whole was worthy of any opera troupe that has been heard here. No, we must say in spite of one or two deductions further. The Figaro of Mr. CAMPBELL, particularly, which was too stiff and serious; he sings the music finely, and with a rich, sonorous voice, but it is no fault of his that he was not born with the *vis comica*, such as we have

seen in the Italians and somewhat in Formes. Nor was Mr. HALL's Don Bartolo more than indifferent good; but here it is a small part compared with that in Rossini's "Barber." But speaking of the smaller parts, we must acknowledge that the tenor, Mr. NORDBLOM, really appeared and sung to very good advantage as the old music master Don Basilio, and the old Marcellina of Miss STOCKTON was a fair contribution to the completeness of the thing. Mr. LAWRENCE, as the Count, both sang and acted better than we have heard him in other rôles; his baritone is of a rich and musical quality, and he uses it generally well, if sometimes with some overdoing of expression.

Now for the rest we can indulge in praise with little scruple. Surely it is rare good fortune to see the three principal female parts so charmingly presented. To each of them has Mozart given of his divinest melody without stint. The airs of Susanna and the Countess and the Page are a whole priceless treasury of song. By favor of the ladies, his superiors, this fascinating young rogue of a Cherubino must be allowed to claim our attention first. And never was he more fascinating than in the impersonation of Mrs. SEAGIN. It lacked no grace of personal beauty; free, natural, refined action; rich, pure mezzo-soprano voice, and expressive rendering of the music. This young Don Juan in the bud, just awake to the strange mystery of the passion that is to absorb him, could not have sung his own trembling sweet confessions (we mean the ideal Cherubino himself) more feebly, more beautifully than they were sung here. The "Non so più cosa son" and "Voi che sapete" told their story after Mozart's own heart, there can be no doubt. All the pretty by-play, too, was all alive with cunning humor.

Miss ROSE HERSE had only her petite figure (dwarfed still more in the presence of her maid) to contend against in her otherwise very happy presentation of the Countess. Her action was natural and easy, and she sang, with her somewhat small but telling voice, delightfully. She is indeed a finished singer, and is always in earnest, making the most of every moment of her part whether in song or action.

Then, for the Susanna, in one of her many and successful rôles, Miss FARRAR-Rosa pleased us so much. You almost forgot the ponderous physique in the unflagging animation, the ease and sprightly humor of her action, ever felicitous and winning every one's good will. She was in fine voice,—particularly that evening, the stormy Saturday, when the theatre was crowded—and sang in her best style. In the pure and heavenly melody of "Deh vieni," to a most exquisite fine execution she added something nearer to the true high feeling than we have felt in many of her vocal triumphs. The Letter duet: "Sull'aria," between her and the Countess, was surpassingly beautiful, and had of course to be repeated.

[The rest, our printer says, must wait.]

MERE MENTION. Do not forget Mr. PARKER's Trio Concert this evening; nor the Russians this afternoon, and, best of all, their Sacred Concert at Selwyn's to-morrow evening; they had the best sort of audience, and a large one, on Wednesday, the first night of their return.

Miss Mehlig's Concert.

(From the New York Tribune, Jan. 20.)

A new pianist has come among us. She has been heard several times in public, but only as an accessory, and not as the central point of interest. Each time, however, that she has appeared, the good impression that she first produced has been strengthened, and the belief confirmed that her abilities are of no ordinary measure of excellence.

Last evening, this young lady gave her first concert at Steinway Hall. The programme was addressed rather to musicians than to a general audience, and the selections were made with a view doubtless of showing the general scope of Miss Mehlig's studies in her art, and the results that she has attained. The recital of the pieces that she played will illustrate the variety of her subjects and styles:

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| Trio, op. 97 (pianoforte violin and cello). Beethoven. |
| Nocturne. Chopin. |
| Prelude and Fugue. Bach. |
| A Carnival piece, op. 9. Schumann. |
| Grand Polonaise. Liszt. |

Here we have a programme that is calculated to test the powers of the most consummate pianist. To play it one must be master of every style, of the breadth and repose necessary to the interpretation of Beethoven, of the nervous sensibility, capriciousness of mood, and poetic subtlety that belong to Chopin; of the dramatic intensity, restlessness, fire, and passion that characterize Schumann; of the steadfastness, and strength, and firmness that are essential to the playing of the fugues of Bach; of the transcendent execution that Liszt requires of those who would conquer his most difficult works.

That all these gifts should be centred upon one performer it would be too much to expect, and yet Miss Mehlig has so far possessed herself of them as to entitle her to be considered a really great artist. No other could hold an audience of connoisseurs such as that gathered last evening so long and so firmly, for some of the pieces were certainly "caviare to the general," and such as one looks rather to hear in a

quiet music-room, with a handful of listeners, than in a public concert hall. Of this character was Schumann's description of the Carnival, a composition we should hardly think less than 40 pages in length, and requiring at least 20 minutes to play; but it was listened to not only with patience but with interest, and its close was followed by the applause of those unmistakably pleased.

The sentiment with which the Nocturne of Chopin was played was of the right quality, not exaggerated into sentimentality on the one hand nor held with too much strictness on the other. The fugue by Bach illustrated the accuracy of Miss Mehlig's playing and the mechanical finish to which she had brought it, for in a fugue there is no room for sentiment and nothing tells but inexorable exactness. Four melodies are being twisted and interwoven and still are to be kept distinct, and a false note ruins everything. The fugue that Miss Mehlig played was the one in G minor, composed for organ and arranged by Liszt for the piano. The arrangement is one of great excellence, the pedal part being finely worked in. Miss Mehlig played it grandly, with a downright earnestness that befitted the composition, and with a clearness and force and a distinctness of the themes that did her the greatest credit. That it might be seen how far she had overcome the final possibilities of the instrument as summed up by the great headmaster of the school of difficulties, the young artist played for a closing piece Liszt's Grande Polonaise. The composition was, we have heard, studied by her under the personal direction of the composer, and Miss Mehlig certainly rendered it with wonderful nerve and power, and a technical skill that at once set at rest all question as to her being entitled to hold a foremost rank among the pianists of the present day.

The Russian Opera.

The Russian Opera Company now performing at the French Theatre is worthy of more than a passing notice. It is presenting to the public a performance entirely different from any that has been given here—an exceptional performance—one that we hear as it were by accident, and which is not likely to be repeated soon. Judged by the standards that we apply to French and Italian operas, the representation falls curiously short of artistic perfection, and those who care only to have their ears gratified by melodious strains will not attain that result by going to the Russian Opera. And for this very reason the performance seems to us to be the more interesting, and the more absolutely it differs in every particular from the Italian models, the more deeply interesting it becomes. And certainly from this point of view it is everything that could be wished. It is the reverse of all one's preconceived notions of opera.

In the first place, it is most curious to hear a language spoken, not one word of which from beginning to end carries the slightest idea to the mind of the hearer. This is not possible either with the French, the German, or the Italian, all of which are cognate to our tongue, and have many words of a familiar sound even to those who have never studied the language; but the Russian fails to give the hearer a single clue. The work performed is called a "comic opera." It is as comic as its title, "Askold's Tomb." An important scene is in a graveyard, and a heavy pall of solemnity covers the entire play. In fact, the predominant feature both of the music and the words is melancholy. If, then, this is a specimen of Russian comedy, we shudder to think what Russian tragedy must be. We believe this work to be a direct reflection of the character of the people. Light-heartedness is the last result of civilization. Neither the Irish, nor the Hungarians, nor the Poles, nor the Russians have any of it in their national music. The opera, besides being very heavy and sombre, is not treated at all after the manner of operatic composers in general. There is not a trio, or a quartet, or a concerted piece of any kind, except one duet, from the beginning to the end. The performers sing each by himself, assisted sometimes by a chorus. No action is attempted. The prima donna folds her arms and moves quietly and sadly up and down the stage as she sings. It is not that she does not know how to act, but that she has no intention whatever of trying to. A perfect repose and self-control and quiet is manifested in every motion.

The dresses are quaint and singular, and some of them are very rich and beautiful.

In the course of the opera two national dances occur. The first of these is danced by four of the ladies of the company in long dresses, with the stately movements of a minuet, and accompanied with graceful, slow wavings of the arms—altogether a strange and unaccustomed dance, as different as possible from the indecent caperings of the French stage.

Finally, the whole performance seemed to us not

only novel and interesting, but wonderfully instructive. In two hours at this representation one can get a clearer insight into the manners, and costumes, and customs, and national traits of this far-off and great Slavic race, than in weeks of delving among books. The stage is the epitome of a nation's life, and here is an opportunity such as seldom occurs to study that of our Russian friends.—*N. Y. Sun, Dec. 17.*

A Fashionable Concert at Steinway Hall.

The Church Music Association is an organization that has created quite a sensation among the fashionable people of the city. It is under the auspices of the clergy and laity of the Episcopal churches of this city in general, and of Trinity Church in especial. Upon its Executive Committee are Mrs. Astor, Mrs. Cutting, Mrs. Mott, Mrs. Sam. Barlow, Mrs. Dix, and other prominent ladies.

Its purpose is to organize a chorus from the most proficient amateurs, having regard also to the social position of the members. As amateurs are not altogether to be trusted, there is a nucleus of German professionals to give them steadiness and courage. In all there are about 150 in the chorus, and they are supported by an orchestra of some fifty pieces. Dr. Pech, an organist of Trinity parish, conducts.

They give three concerts; no tickets are sold. The affair is supported by the subscribers, of whom there are fifty, each subscriber paying one hundred dollars, and being entitled to twenty-three tickets to each concert. With these they invite their friends. On the ticket is printed "Evening dress"—an indication that the gentlemen are expected in dress-coats, and the ladies without bonnets. The ushers are gentlemen prominent in society. The place of holding the concerts is Steinway Hall. The music performed is a mass by one of the great composers, and a secular composition.

On Wednesday last, the first concert of the season took place. A canvas covered way from the street to the entrance of the hall was erected, and the hall itself was carpeted for the occasion. There never was such an audience in it before. All fashionable New York was present in elegant attire, and as for the chorus it was resplendent in low-necked dresses and powdered hair, and smiled sweetly to its near relative, the audience. The clergy flecked the audience here and there in spots of blandly smiling black, and looked complacently upon their flocks. Ordinary concerts begin at 8 o'clock, but this one began at half-past 8, though it compensated for the late beginning by not getting out till half-past 11.

Mozart's Twelfth Mass and the first half of Oberon were sung indifferently well, though far better than any one who heard the rehearsals would have supposed possible. Though some two thousand persons were present, the concert was a private one, and is entitled to immunity from criticism, and we therefore make none. A marked feature of the occasion was the conductor, Mr. James Pech, "Mus. Doc. Oxon.," or Oxford musical doctor. His peculiarity as a conductor is that he kicks time. The method, though singular, might be pardoned as an eccentricity if he kicked at the same time with his beat; but as the two were seldom together, his orchestra, totally unused to such proceedings, were at a loss whether to give their attention to his feet or his hands, and, between the two, floundered badly in their time. Dr. Pech has also signalized himself by a printed analysis of the music, interspersed with biographical references to himself and his own emotions at various epochs of his life. Among the singular statements that he makes is one to the effect that if he had been more intimate with his chorus he would have left out a few bars from one of the movements, but we fail to do him justice; his own words are alone sufficient for that—here they are:

"Had our acquaintance with the highly-refined and cultivated circle, comprising those ladies and gentlemen who compose our very excellent chorus, been of longer standing, we should have exercised a judicious daring, and expunged the middle part of the *Dona*, when our delight, we might say our raptures, would have been as perfect as intense."

And here is another bit of autobiography of refreshing sweetness and simplicity, and so artlessly introduced:

"The *Et Incarnatus* is exquisite. The flow of the melody is so graceful—the answers are so finely made in the several parts, and the whole is so divinely pathetic as well as simple, that (on hearing it, some years since, when conducting this Mass at the People's Philharmonic Concerts, in Exeter Hall, London, with Mme. Catherine Hayes as *Prima*,) we thought it could not be exceeded, till we arrived at the *Benedictus*."

At the next concert the Association is to give Mendelssohn's "Hymn of Praise," and Haydn's Sixteenth Mass.—*Sun, Jan. 18.*

Special Notices.

DESCRIPTIVE LIST OF THE LATEST MUSIC,

Published by Oliver Ditson & Co.

Vocal, with Piano Accompaniment.

- Sweet and low. Quartet. 3. C. Barnby. 35
Tennyson's Lullaby set to music, which, if babies had musically-cultivated ears, would not fail to lull them in their most uneasy moments.
- Jim the Carter Lad. 3. C to e. Williams. 30
A cheerful, jolly strain, well calculated to drive away the blues.
- A Star in the dark (Una stella in notte bruna). Song. Muratori. 40
When the corn is waving. Blamphin. 30
Non Partir. (And wilt thou go). Boott. 35
Il mio dolor. (My sorrow). Guglielmo. 35
Au revoir! not adieu. 3. D minor and major. Levey. 35

- A very desirable song, far above the ordinary grade.
- How gently fall those simple words, "God bless you." 3. C to e. Thomas. 35
Essentially a home ballad, embodying sentiments with melody combined, which must find a home in every human heart.
- A brighter world than this. 2. F to f. Cox. 30
A sweet, soothing ballad, which ought to (and probably will) become a great favorite.
- Don't treat a man disdainfully. 3. C to g. Williams. 30
A lively song, fraught with good-natured sentiment.

Instrumental.

- March for the Piano-forte. 4 hands. For Teacher and Pupil. 2. C. Mason. 75
The pupil's (or primo) part of the duet is limited to the compass of a fifth, and is consequently available to pupils of the smallest executive capacity.
- Polka from "Hamlet". Thomas. 35
Ein herz, ein sinn. (One heart, one soul). Polka Mazurka. Strauss. 40
Addie Galop. Brillante. 5. Eb. Wiegand. 60
Good practice for pupils, and good music withal.
- Lob der Frauen. (Praise of Woman). Polka Mazurka. 3. D. Strauss. 40
A very graceful and pleasing Dance Piece which will more than satisfy the most fastidious Terpsichorean devotee.
- Lingering Joys. Polka Mazurka. 3. C. Gerster. 30
Another attractive dance piece similar in character to the preceding.
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